

# Holy Week in the Catholic Church.

## Curious Rites and Ceremonies and the Explanation of Their Symbolic Meaning and Teachings.

By LINDSEY FLAVEL MINES.

**R**ICH in ceremonies of solemn and impressive beauty and deep religious symbolism, the closing period of Lent, popularly known as Holy Week, has ever held attractions not only for the faithful of the Catholic Church, but for many others as well outside her fold. And this interest is aroused, not alone from the momentous events of the foundation of Christianity that are at this time especially commemorated, and the teachings conveyed in the liturgical observances of the season, but from these various observances themselves, and their interwoven rites, extending so far back into the misty realm of history that no man can say with authority whence they arose.

### Old Customs Retained.

For the mother church, once observances have received the stamp of her approval, seldom abolishes entirely any ceremonies. They may be abrogated, restricted to some particular locality, or to some religious order, or to some time of the year, or some feast of her calendar. Customs, the necessity for which has vanished with the passing of the years, are eliminated or altered, for the Church never tolerates the useless, yet now and again they recur, monuments of time's own fashioning, testifying to the honorable crown of ages that rests upon the brow of the Church.

An example of this is seen at prayers during Lent and Advent. After the announcement "Gremus" (Let us pray), the deacon says, "Flectamus genua" (Let us bend our knees), and then, "Levate" (Rise up). There were no pews or seats in the ancient church; the people either stood or knelt, while the aged or weak were permitted to lean upon staves. But even these were laid aside during the gospel.

### Reason Not Plain.

During Lent, more than in any other portion of the ecclesiastical year, the bond between the primitive church and the church of today becomes closer, so that often those who are not familiar with early Christian rites and discipline—and sometimes those who are—feel compelled to ask: "But why? There is a reason for this or for that. What is it?" and it is not infrequently happens that those who should be able to answer are unable to give a clear or satisfactory explanation. Of the ceremonies, none is more interesting than that of the blessing of the palms.

### Blessing of the Palms.

There was probably, in earlier times, a special mass for the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday, since the service, as it remains, has an introit, collect, epistle, gradual, gospel, and a preface—that is, it is complete up to the canon.

The celebrating priest, clad in a violet cope, proceeds to the epistle corner of the altar, where the prayer is read. Then come the epistle and gradual, and the gospel is chanted with the usual ceremonies. The blessing of the palms and their distribution to the officiating clergy and others and to the faithful follows.

The procession starts from the sanctuary, led by the thurifer with burning incense. The subdeacon, attended by acolytes and carrying a processional cross, follows; then come the other acolytes and the clergy, in the usual order, and last of all the celebrant, with the deacon walking at his left hand. All bear palms, and the members of the congregation, who remain standing during the continuance of the procession, also hold the palms in their right hands, as is done later, during the mass, when the Passion is read.

Antiphons are sung as the procession makes its way to the door of the church. The clergy and their attendants pass out and remain outside, while two or four singers re-enter and, facing the door, begin the hymn "Gloria, laus et honor," the verses of which are sung in alternation by those without and within.

Then those outside start to return, but find the door closed against them; whereat the subdeacon knocks on it with the

is no longer seen, though a form for this is still retained in the Pontifical. On this day, save for the one celebrant, all the priests refrain from celebrating mass. The explanation given is that it is "not only as a manifestation of sorrow and mourning, for which reason they abstain from offering the most holy sacrifice on the following Friday and Saturday, but to imitate in some manner our Lord's Supper, when, for the first time, he performed the function of high priest. He was the only celebrant, and the apostles received communion from his hands."—(Abbe Mazzinelli).

### Relic of Ancient Days.

In addition to this pious lesson, the student may also see in this a remnant of primitive discipline, when it was not customary to celebrate the sacred mysteries as often as now, and there existed both lay and ecclesiastical communion. Of these the canon makes frequent mention. To show their office and dignity, the clergy wore both surplice and stole, and received in advance of the people, within the sanctuary rail.

A popular and erroneous idea has arisen that this is the paschal communion of the clergy. It is entirely a false impression.

### Bells at the Gloria.

The "Gloria in Excelsis" is sung during this mass and the bells ring out until it is concluded; then they are no more heard until Holy Saturday. Pearing in mind the kiss of the betrayer, the kiss of peace is not given at the communion.

Two large Hosts are today consecrated by the celebrant, one being reserved for the next day, when no consecration takes place. Before washing his fingers he puts the reserved Host into the chalice, which is placed in the middle of the altar and covered with pall, paten, and veil.

Banked with palms and lilies and other costly flowers, a repository has been prepared to be the resting place of the blessed sacrament. Candles enrich it with light, and no effort is spared to adorn and beautify it. To this tomb, as it is called, the reserved Host is conveyed in solemn procession, with lights and incense. Before the tomb a guard of honor is kept, and often many of the faithful spend the night in the church in prayer.

### Stripping of the Altars.

The Host is reverently placed within the repository, while a veil, in memory of the linen grave clothes, is wrapped about it, and the procession returns in silence to the sanctuary. There vespers are said, at the close of which the various altars of the church are stripped of their coverings and ornaments. This is to characterize the stripping of garments from our Lord before he was nailed to the cross.

As already stated, the holy oils for the year are also blessed on Holy Thursday. This is done by the Bishop, who today celebrates the mass. Besides his ordinary ministers he is assisted by twelve priests in chasubles and seven deacons and seven subdeacons in dalmatics and tunics of white.

When the Bishop is seated the archdeacon approaches him and in a loud voice calls: "Oleum infirmorum" (the oil for the sick).

This is brought from the sacristy in a silver vase, over which is spread a crimson veil. A subdeacon precedes him. He presents it to the archdeacon, who in turn presents it to the Bishop. The latter lays aside his mitre, rises, and in a loud voice exorcises and blesses the oil.

The desire is expressed that the Holy Ghost be sent forth "upon this fatness of the olive which thou hast vouchsafed to bring forth out of a green tree, for the strengthening and refreshing of soul and body; that by thy grace and benediction whoever is anointed with this oil of heavenly virtue may receive protection of soul and body and deliverance from all pains, all infirmities, all ills of soul and body."

At the completion of the blessing the vase is returned to the sacristy and the ceremonies of the mass are resumed. After the communion the Bishop re-

turns to the fastidist and the archdeacon, as before, calls: "Oleum ad sanctum chrismum" (oil for the holy chrism) and "Oleum catechumenorum." Incense is blessed in the usual manner, and the priests, deacons and subdeacons proceed to the sacristy to bring the oils. These are carried in procession by two deacons, in advance of whom walks a subdeacon with a vessel of balsam. The remainder follow in order, while the cantors and chorists sing the hymn, "O, Redemptor."

The archdeacon receives the oil of chrism and places it, covered with a white cloth, on the table before the Bishop. The balsam is also placed beside it, and the Bishop, again laying aside his mitre, begins the prayers of blessing. These completed, the mitre is resumed and a little of the oil from the vase containing the chrism is mixed in a paten with some of the balsam.

**Blessing on the Chrism.**

Again the Bishop sits, and still covered, breathes on the chrism thrice, in the form of a cross. Then the twelve priests approach, each breathing upon the sacred oil. At the conclusion the exorcism is pronounced by the Bishop standing.

The preface follows, for, as stated, this blessing was formerly performed at a special mass. Once more at the completion of the blessing the deacons and subdeacons join in: "In quo salus mundi pendet" (on which hangs the salvation of the world). Prostrate on the ground, the chorists respond, "Venite, adoremus" (come, let us adore him).

An acolyte spreads one linen cloth over the altar table, or mensa, and the priest and his assistant rise and ascend the steps. The lessons from the Old Testament are read, and then the Passion according to St. John. Then follow prayers for both the clergy and laity of all sorts and conditions, as well as for heretics and schismatics, pagans and others outside the Church's fold.

### Adoration of the Cross.

At the conclusion of the prayers the priest puts his vestment aside and takes the veiled cross from the altar. Standing at the epistle corner, the top of the cross is uncovered, the priest chanting in a low voice: "Ecce lignum crucis" (behold the wood of the cross). Deacons and subdeacons join in: "In quo salus mundi pendet" (on which hangs the salvation of the world). Prostrate on the ground, the chorists respond, "Venite, adoremus" (come, let us adore him).

Passing to the other side of the altar, the right arm of the cross is uncovered, the same words are sung, only in a little louder tone; then in the center of the altar the unveiling is completed and the "Ecce lignum" sung loudly, after which the officiant and other clergy adore and kiss the crucifix, kneeling thrice, and the laity adore in their turn.

The first unveiling and the low tone express the revelation of the redemption to the apostles; the second, of the revelation to the Jews at Pentecost, and the third, of the preaching of the gospel to all creatures. The first unveiling is in preparation for the insults in the House of Caiaphas; the second, for the outrages in the praetorium, and the third, for the tragedy of Calvary.

### Chanting the Reproaches.

While the adoration of the cross is in progress the reproaches are sung, and at the end of each the celebrated Trisagium, "Agios o Theos"—is sung in Greek and Latin.

This hymn is said to have been divinely inspired during an earthquake in Constantinople. When the hymn was sung the shocks ceased. Its introduction is also, according to some, illustrative of the unity of the churches of the East and West. The words are: "Holy God! Holy and Strong God! Holy and immortal God! Have Mercy on us!"

Sacred liturgy has never produced anything more beautiful, touching, and plaintive than the lamentations and reproaches of Holy Week. Pitched in a minor key, they awake responsive chords of sorrow in almost every heart. Tender, too, in their language: "What more should I have done to thee, and have not done? I have planted thee for my most beautiful vineyard; and thou hast proved very bitter to me; for in my thirst thou gavest me vinegar to drink, and with a spear thou hast pierced the side of thy Saviour."

The meaning of the words, and the solemnity of the occasion, and the fact that the procession is formed, and the Host is brought back to the sanctuary from the repository in the same order in which it was conveyed the day before. Meantime the altar candles have been lighted, and the Blessed Sacrament, having been placed on the altar, is incensed. Water and wine are mixed in a chalice, and again the priest takes the Host.

According to the rubrics, the prelate or superior, goes to the place appointed in a violet cope, attended by deacon and subdeacon in vestments of white. The gospel sung in the mass of the day is again chanted, lights, incense, and all the usual ceremony being observed. After the

## Relics of the Ancient Rites Retained in the Observances of the Present Day and Whence They Rose.

he incenses the host, the wine, and the altar.

The prayer "Libera Nos" is today said aloud in token of the descent of the Saviour into purgatory, and his liberation of the souls, who were there awaiting his coming. And in order to distinguish the ceremony of this day still further from those of other days, the elevation is made with the right hand only. No bells are rung, and a wooden clapper announces the solemn moment to the faithful and only.

The Host is then broken into three particles by the priest, the Host being dropped into the chalice, and all are consumed by the celebrant.

Vespers are then said in a low tone, and the office of the day is ended.

The office of Holy Saturday, proper, deals entirely with the burial of the Saviour and his stay in the tomb. The celebrations that today take place on Saturday belong to Easter eve, when they were originally observed, and the liturgical language makes use of the word "night" again and again.

### On Holy Saturday.

Many and important are the ceremonies of this time, for it was during this night that the catechumens were admitted to baptism. The services were intended to last throughout the long vigil until the dawn of Easter should tinge the eastern skies. In the porch or vestibule of the church were gathered those catechumens who were to be received, and in order to keep their attention, lessons and prayers were employed to fill the intervening time.

During this night also the new fire, the paschal candle, and the baptismal fonts are blessed. The altar is dressed, but no candles are lit, and the lamps of the church are extinguished. Outside the church, if convenient, otherwise in the entrance, the officiating priest and his ministers, incense bearer, crucifer, etc., gather, and a fire is struck from a flint and kindled. The first is a type of Christ, a true cornerstone, from whom the flame of charity is derived.

### New Fire Blessed.

As soon as the coals are burning the celebrant, with the usual salutation, "Dominus Vobiscum," begins the prayers beseeching God to "bless the light, which is blessed and sanctified by thee, who hast enlightened the whole world; that we may be enlightened by that light and inflamed with the fire of thy brightness; and as thou didst give light to Moses when he went out of Egypt, so illuminate our hearts and senses that we may attain light and life everlasting."

The five grains of incense that are to be fixed in the paschal candle are then blessed, an acolyte in the meantime putting some of the new fire into the censer. After the prayer incense is put into the censer and the grains and fire sprinkled thrice with holy water and incensed.

### "Lumen Christi!"

The deacon then takes a rod having three candles fixed in the top. Preceded by the thurifer and crucifer, the procession returns to the church, the priest following last of all. When they enter one of the candles on the rod is kindled by an acolyte from the new fire. The deacon and the rest kneel, while the subdeacon, standing, says, in a low voice: "Lumen Christi!" (Behold the light of Christ), and the response, "Deo Gratias" (Thanks be to God).

The three candles are symbolic of the Trinity, while the deacon in white typifies the white-clad angel at the sepulcher. The meaning of the words, and the solemnity of the occasion, and the fact that the procession is formed, and the Host is brought back to the sanctuary from the repository in the same order in which it was conveyed the day before. Meantime the altar candles have been lighted, and the Blessed Sacrament, having been placed on the altar, is incensed. Water and wine are mixed in a chalice, and again the priest takes the Host.

Receiving the priest's benediction, the deacon then proceeds to bless the paschal candle, and in this manner the ceremony is reserved to the deacon, even in the presence of high prelates. For as Christ, who is typified by this column of wax, is buried, and again services from Easter to Ascension, ap-

peared first to the holy women, and then to the disciples at Emmaus before showing himself to the apostles met together, so this ceremony has always been a privilege of this order of the clergy.

The deacon goes to the gospel side, the book is incensed, and, all standing, during the gospel, the sublime chant "Exultet" is begun. At the words "Therefore, on this sacred night, receive, O Holy Father, the evening sacrifice of this incense," the five grains of incense are fixed in the candle in the shape of a cross. The candle is lighted at the words "And now we know the excellence of this pillar, which the sparkling fire lights for the honor of God." Later the lamps are also lit.

### Reading the Prophecies.

The prophecies come next in order. After these the catechumens were instructed and prepared to receive baptism. The prophecies are twelve in number, and at the close of each follows a tract and a prayer. Genesifications are made before each prayer except the last, in which is related the story of the three Hebrew young men who preferred to enter the fiery furnace rather than bow to an idol. Most of the catechumens were taken from paganism, and in this manner the Church sought to impress them with her condemnation of idolatry.

Before the baptisms, the font was blessed immediately the prophecies and instructions ended. In churches where there is no font this is omitted, and the litany follows after the prophecies. Otherwise the clergy go to the font singing the tract, "As pantheus the hart."

### Blessing of the Font.

Prayers are recited and a preface chanted in the course of which the waters are divided in the form of a cross by the hand of the priest to show the "virtue of the cross their regenerating power is derived; he touches them again, to implant this virtue upon them, that they may purify and vivify; then, he throws some drops toward the four parts of the world, to show that all nations are called to the grace of baptism."

The waters are breathed upon thrice in the form of a cross, and the paschal candles dipped into the font, and the waters are again breathed upon in the shape of a Greek Psi—the initial of the word spirit in that language.

At the close of these blessings, the people are sprinkled, and the choir is reserved to be distributed to the faithful. Then some of the oil of catechumens and incense are poured into the font with appropriate prayers, first separately, and then together, immediately after this the baptisms follow.

### Litany and the Mass.

The litany is now sung, and during it the priest and his ministers go to the sacristy to robe themselves in white for the mass, and the altar candles are lighted.

At the close of the epistle the priest thrice repeats, "Alleluia," which the choir repeats. Again he responds "Confitemini Domino" ("Give praise to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.")

In this mass there is no offertory, for it would have taken too long for the faithful to present their gifts; nor is the "Agnus Dei" sung; and when the ablution is concluded, vespers are said. They are composed of the briefest of the Psalms.

In early days it was customary for clergy and people to go in procession early Sunday morning around the church, in imitation of the visit of the three Marys to the sepulcher, and still in some places this is done, especially at St. Peter's in Rome.

Easter is dawn; the matins of this day contain only one short nocturn, for the night is far spent; the praises of lauds are intoned; the days of sorrow are numbered.

Clad in her festal ornaments and lifting her voice in rejoicing, the Church sings triumphantly: "Alleluia! Alleluia! He is risen! Alleluia!"

## LEGAL DECISIONS OF INTEREST TO LAWYER AND LAYMAN

### Infection, Not Hydrophobia.

In an action for damages in Louisiana for the death of a person alleged to have been caused by a dog bite, the evidence showed that the daughter of the deceased attempted to cure the wound by putting on it some of the half of the dog. At the end of a week erysipelas developed, and on the trial the physicians testified that it was due directly to infection caused by the dog's hair, and not the bite. (Martinez vs. Bernhard, 38 So. Rep. 901.)

### Mummy Is a Corpse.

The question whether a mummy is a corpse or a chattel was raised in an English court before Justice Darling. In a suit against a railway company for damages to a mummy. The mummy was the preserved body of a woman of the royal tribe of the Incas of Peru, and was about 450 years old. The jury awarded a verdict of \$25 damages, and held that the mummy was a corpse.

### Slang Holds Good.

The remark of a man on his death bed uttered in slang is not on that account deprived of its character of a dying declaration, holds Judge Hall of the Superior Court of Cook county, Chicago, in this case the defendant had been brought to the bedside of a dying man for identification, and when the latter was asked if he knew him, he replied: "You bet your life, he's the man."

### When Burglary Isn't Burglary.

In order to constitute burglary in Utah, the crime must be committed between sunset and sunrise, and where evidence shows that a building was robbed between 9:30 p. m. and 6:30 a. m., and that the sun rose at 4:38 a. m., the Supreme Court of Utah in the case of the State vs. Miller (67 Pac. Rep.) holds that burglary was not committed.

### Liability of Saloonkeeper.

In a suit against a saloonkeeper for damages brought by the wife of an habitual drunkard to whom the saloonkeeper sold whisky, the Supreme Court of Iowa, in the case of Bellows vs. Apleand (62 N. W. Rep. 22), holds that damages can be recovered only for the sales of liquor by the saloonkeeper and that if the husband procured intoxicating liquors from other than the defendant which contributed to his intoxicated condition the defendant is not liable for the entire damages sustained.

### Rights Not Exclusive.

Where authority is given a steam railroad by a city to cross a street with its tracks, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, in the case of Atchison, etc. Ry. Co. vs. General Electric Ry. Co. (112 Fed. Rep. 639), holds that no exclusive rights in such street are thereby conferred, but that the right granted is subordinate to the use of the street for ordinary street purposes, which include the operation of a street railroad thereon; and the railroad company is not entitled to damages because of the construction of a street railway along such street, on the ground of delay to its trains, and increased danger at the crossing; nor can it maintain a suit in equity for an injunction against such use.

### Heirs' Contract Binding.

A contract between heirs whereby one of them agrees to accept a specific amount advanced to him, in full of his expectancy in the estate, is held by the Supreme Court of Indiana in the case of Eisler vs. Hoppel (62 N. E. Rep. 692), not to be contrary to public policy, and in the absence of fraud, and when supported by a valuable consideration, will be enforced by a court of equity against such heir, even though it should turn out to have been a disadvantageous bargain to him.

### Not Double Taxation.

The imposition of a license tax by a municipality upon "each and every street railway company" in addition to ad valorem taxation on a company's property, is held by the Supreme Court of Virginia in the case of Newport News, etc., Company vs. City of Newport News (46 S. E. Rep. 545), not to be unequal taxation, since the license tax is required as to licensees is that the tax shall be the same on all those in the same business; nor is the imposition of a license tax upon a company, used in carrying on the business, double taxation.

### Newspaper Owner's Liability.

A newspaper owner, after publishing an advertisement under a verbal contract that it would be discontinued on notice, sold his business, including the account of the advertising, in question. Soon after the sale the original newspaper owner was told to discontinue the advertisement, and he then gave notice of discontinuance should be sent to his purchaser. But the Supreme Court of Appeals in good faith, continued the publication of the advertisement. In a suit by the purchaser of the newspaper business on the bill for advertising the Supreme Court of New Hampshire (Ingalls vs. Burlington, 151 Atl. Rep. 375) sustained a judgment against the newspaper owner, on the ground that the notice to the original owner terminated the contract, and that the plaintiff's subsequent publication of the advertisement without the knowledge or consent of the defendant did not raise an implied promise on the part of the latter to pay therefor, nor did any duty rest upon him to ascertain whether the advertisement had been in fact discontinued.

### Cannot Recover Damages.

The division or altered transmission of surface water, caused by the erection of a building upon land over which it is accustomed to flow, is held by the Court of Errors and Appeals of New Jersey, in the case of Jessup vs. Bamford Bros. & Co. (51 Atl. Rep. 145), not to afford any ground of action to a person who suffers injury by reason thereof.

### Mortgage Is in Force.

Where a corporation borrows and retains money from another corporation and executes a mortgage of its property to secure such loan, the United States Circuit Court of California, in the case of Savings and Trust Company of Cleveland, Ohio, vs. Bear Valley Inn Company (112 Fed. Rep. 639), holds that it will not be permitted to deny the power to mortgage its property or the power of the lender to hold such security.

### Ruling in Bankruptcy.

A person should not be adjudged a bankrupt on his voluntary petition, where an involuntary petition is pending, and administration under the voluntary petition will render preferences complained of in the involuntary petition unavailable, by reason of the "one month" limitation fixed by bankruptcy act, holds Judge Ambler of the United States District Court in re Dwyer (112 Fed. Rep. 777).

### Status of Non-Resident's Property.

Property within the limits of a city owned by a non-resident may be dealt with by the city as though it belonged to a resident, holds Judge Buffington of the United States Court of Pennsylvania, in the case of McIntosh vs. City of Pittsburgh (112 Fed. Rep. 765), and the owner is bound to take notice of an ordinance affecting such property when it has been duly promulgated as required by law, whether State or municipal.

### Injunction Does Not Prevent.

Injunctions will not prevent the board of supervisors of a town from letting a contract in direct contravention of the charter, holds the Supreme Court of California, in the case of Barto vs. Board of Supervisors, as the court is bound to presume that the board will do its duty, and as there could be no irreparable injury in any event, since a contract let in violation of the charter would be void.

### Policeman a State Officer.

A police officer is an official of the State and not of the municipality, holds the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia in the case of Smith vs. Bryan (40 S. E. Rep. 632).



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